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URGENT NOTICE

TO: All MA Ambulance Services

All MA EMTs

FROM: Abdullah Rehayem, Director

RE: Ferno PROFlexx Stretcher Failures and Cot Handling Safety

DATE: August 7, 2008

The Department has received information documenting several instances in which Ferno PROFlexx model 35-P stretchers (ambulance cots) have suffered metal fatigue and breakage of the telescoping legs. The area of highest concern is the X frame axle (where both telescoping legs connect).

All ambulance services using this model stretcher should immediately inspect all of these cots for signs of metal fatigue (shavings, bent support arms, cracks, etc.). If such signs are discovered, remove the cot from service immediately and arrange for inspection and maintenance by a factory authorized representative as soon as possible. Even if you do not discover any signs of metal fatigue, you should contact Ferno-Washington, or the dealer who provided your stretcher, for immediate inspection and/or maintenance.

Furthermore, EMTs should be reminded to keep both hands firmly on the cot AT ALL TIMES, since at least one cot leg break occurred as the EMTs wheeled a patient toward the ambulance. In addition, wheeling the patient at the lowest cot height is the safest method to minimize any potential harm to the patient, since catastrophic failure can occur without warning. Finally, all patients must be firmly secured to the cot using the over the shoulder harness, hip and leg straps.

If your service has experienced failure of a Ferno PROFlexx cot, or any other medical device, please complete a Serious Incident Report Form and submit it to this office. (For the form, go to www.mass.gov/dph/oems, scroll down to "Forms," then click on the "Ambulance Services" section).

In addition, ambulance services should also file a "Medical Devices Report" report with the FDA at https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/medwatch/medwatch-online.htm.